

What is claimed is:

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1. A trailer transport system for tracking trains having a plurality of rail cars, wherein each rail car can transport a trailer, the system comprising:
a computer system having a trailer tracking program, wherein the trailer tracking program receives information regarding a trailer to be transported and stores the information in a record; and
a plurality of terminals, wherein each terminal includes a terminal management system communicatively connected to the computer system, wherein the terminal management system pulls up the record corresponding to the trailer to be transported when the trailer arrives at the terminal and modifies the record to reflect the trailer's transportation status.
 2. The system according to claim 1, wherein each terminal includes a track and a loading pad crossing the track to facilitate rapid loading and unloading of trailers from the train.
 3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the computer system includes a reservation system for reserving a slot on a train, wherein the reservation system operates in conjunction with the trailer tracking program to ensure that a trailer to be transported is placed on its assigned train.
 4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the terminal management system includes a trailer tracking system connected to the computer system over a network.
 5. The system according to claim 4, wherein the computer system includes a network and wherein the trailer tracking system includes a terminal interface coupled to the network.

6. The system according to claim 4, wherein the computer system includes a network and wherein the trailer tracking system includes a terminal interface coupled to the network and a hand held computer unit wirelessly coupled to the terminal interface.

7. The system according to claim 4, wherein the trailer tracking system comprises a portable computer.

8. The system according to claim 1, wherein the terminal management system includes a trailer tracking device, wherein the trailer tracking device is a handheld computer connected to the computer system over a wireless communications channel.

9. The system according to claim 1, wherein the terminal management system includes an access restriction system.

10. The system according to claim 6, wherein the access restriction system includes a gate and a gate controller, wherein the gate controller operates in conjunction with the computer system to restrict access to the terminal.

11. In a trailer transport system having a computer system and a plurality of terminals, including a first and a second terminal, wherein each terminal includes a terminal management system communicatively coupled to the computer system, a method of tracking a trailer to be transported between the first and second terminals, the method comprising:

- entering information identifying the trailer;
- storing the information as a record within the computer system;
- modifying the record at trailer check-in, wherein modifying the record includes accessing the record through the terminal management system of the first terminal;
- storing the modified record;
- transporting the trailer from the first terminal to the second terminal;

updating the modified record through the terminal management system of the second terminal, wherein updating includes storing information indicating the trailer has arrived at the second terminal; and
storing the updated record.

12. In a trailer transport system having a computer system and a plurality of terminals, including a first and a second terminal, a system for tracking movement of a trailer, comprising:

a network;

a computer system communicatively coupled to the network, wherein the computer system includes a data storage system used to store information identifying the trailer;

a first terminal management system associated with the first terminal, wherein the first terminal management system is communicatively coupled to the network and communicates through the network to the computer system; and

a second terminal management system associated with the second terminal, wherein the second terminal management system is communicatively coupled to the network and communicates through the network to the computer system;

wherein each terminal management system tracks arrivals and departures of trailers from the terminal and modifies the information stored in the data storage system as a function of said arrivals and departures.

13. The trailer transport system of claim 12, wherein the network comprises a token ring network.

14. The trailer transport system of claim 12, wherein the terminal management system comprises an access restriction system.

15. The trailer transport system of claim 14, wherein the access restriction system comprises an access controller coupled to an access server, wherein the access server is coupled to the network.

16. In a trailer transport system having a computer system and a plurality of terminals, including a first and a second terminal, a system for tracking movement of a trailer, comprising:

a network;

a computer system communicatively coupled to the network, wherein the computer system includes a data storage system used to store information identifying the trailer;

a first access restriction system associated with the first terminal, wherein the first access restriction system is communicatively coupled to the network and communicates through the network to the computer system;

a second access restriction system associated with the second terminal, wherein the second access restriction system is communicatively coupled to the network and communicates through the network to the computer system; and

wherein each access restriction system tracks arrivals and departures of trailers from the terminal and modifies the information stored in the data storage system as a function of said arrivals and departures.

17. The trailer transport system of claim 16, wherein the network comprises a token ring network.

18. The trailer transport system of claim 16, wherein the access restriction system comprises an access controller coupled to an access server, wherein the access server is coupled to the network.

19. The trailer transport system of claim 16, wherein the computer system includes a web server connected through a firewall to the network, wherein the web server is used by trucking companies to reserve a slot on a selected train.

20. The trailer transport system of claim 16, wherein the computer system includes a web server connected through a firewall to the network, wherein the web server is used by trucking companies to enter trailer information to be stored to the data storage system.

21. The trailer transport system of claim 16, wherein the computer system comprises a main frame and an application server, wherein the mainframe and the application server are communicatively coupled to the network.

22. The trailer transport system of claim 16, wherein the access restriction system comprises a hand held computer unit wirelessly coupled to the network.

23. A method of tracking transport of a trailer, comprising:
recording, in a computer system, arrival of the trailer at a first terminal;
checking condition of the trailer;
recording the condition of the trailer in the computer system;
loading the trailer on a train, wherein loading includes performing an air brake inspection;
recording, in the computing system, departure of the train from the first terminal;
recording, in the computing system, arrival of the train at a second terminal;
unloading the trailer from the train;
matching a driver to the trailer through records stored in the computer system;
recording, in the computing system, departure of the trailer from the second terminal; and
storing data corresponding to trailer transport within an accounting system.

24.

A method of controlling access to a parking area for trailers, comprising:
transporting a trailer into the parking area, wherein transporting includes
dispensing a ticket from a ticket dispenser and opening a gate;
inspecting the trailer, wherein inspecting includes scanning the ticket with a
scanner;
issuing an exit code; and
wherein the exit code is used to exit the parking area.

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